

The Sun

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13, 1896.

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The Real Roll of Honor.

Of the seventeen Representatives in Congress who held fast to Democratic honor and principle by voting against the so-called Wilson bill when it first passed the House, the test the second time when the bill was voted on in the form given to it by the Senate. It is unnecessary to name the entire group of gentlemen who stood faithfully by their party up to Feb. 1. All told, they were eight from New York, four from Louisiana, one from New Jersey, one from California, one from Rhode Island, one from Pennsylvania, and one from Connecticut. Coming alone from the heart of the Populist South, the four votes from Louisiana may suggest the question whether they were given primarily in defense of the Democratic party, or of the local sugar interest, still unsettled, but the three who remained steadfast must be recorded as in full standing of partisanship and sincerity. In brief, the six Democrats who, holding fast against the Republican-Populist fraud to the end, showed that they voted against it at first neither as a bluff for more protection nor from some explicable or inexplicable fear of opposition, were:

FRANKLIN BARTLETT, N. Y. (ROBERT C. DAVIS, L. A.)
JAMES W. COVETT, N. Y. (ADOLPH METZ, L.)
JOSEPH C. HENDERSON, N. Y. (ANDREW PRICK, L.)

What wildness of imagination could have dreamed that at the close of a Congressional session but six of the 218 members of the majority should be found worthy of wearing the party name? Six proved Democrats; not Democrats on the strength of membership in an organization that so labels itself, but on the strength of honest and unbetrayed political principles. For these six gentlemen the Democratic position is glorious. For the Democratic party it is, to the last degree, humiliating and repulsive.

The "Democratic" Tariff Bill.

What is the Tariff bill which has passed the two Democratic Houses of Congress, and which awaits the approval, active or passive, of a Democratic President of the United States? To describe the significant features of this bill, and to compare the same with Democratic professions and promises, is a humiliating task.

The bill is so worded that it takes effect on Aug. 1, a date now fifteen days back. The point has been raised that this is *ex post facto* legislation, and therefore unconstitutional. Such would be the case if there was an attempt to levy and collect duties at the new rates upon articles imported since Aug. 1. But it would undoubtedly be held that the date prescribes an impossibility, and that the phrase "on and after the first day of August, 1896," merely requires that the new schedules shall go into operation as soon as the bill is enacted.

Somewhat has figured out the statement that while the average of duties under the McKinley act is about 50 per cent, the average under the new tariff is only about 38 per cent. The attempt will be made to create the impression in the mind of the public that as a protectionist measure this bill compares with the McKinley tariff as 38 with 50, and that tariff reform has gained about 14 per cent. The comparison means nothing, and, whenever or by whomsoever used, it is employed only to deceive. The dishonesty of this method of measuring results is shown by a simple illustration: Suppose that under a high protective tariff every article of import were taxed 50 per cent ad valorem. The average duty under that tariff would be 50 per cent. Suppose, on the other hand, that the country had absolute free trade in everything but opium and ergot, but that the duty on those two articles was 100 per cent. The average duty under that tariff would be 100 per cent, or double the average of the other tariff, highly protective as it was.

The bill is as thoroughly protectionist in every schedule as the McKinley bill. No pretence has been made, either in the House or in the Senate, of attacking the principle of discrimination which the Chicago platform denounced as fraud and robbery, and abhorrent to Democracy. The duties have been revised solely with a view to protection, and not to revenue. Revenue has been left out of sight most of the time. There has been to some extent a redistribution of Governmental favoritism, quite generally in the interests of the South and West as against the North and East. The same scramble for the benefits of protection as is witnessed whenever a new protective tariff is framed, has gone on during every stage of the progress of this "Democratic" measure. The Senate went a little further than the House, but Mr. GORMAN and his backing were only proceeding in the direction pointed out and recommended by Mr. WILSON and Mr. CLEVELAND. Some protective duties have been lowered a little; some increased a little; but protection, in all of its offensiveness and unconstitutionality, is as much the structural principle of this bill as it is of Mr. McKinley's tariff. The crime of perjury, the shame of dishonor, cannot be laid at the doors of the Senate, or fastened upon any particular group of Senators. The perjury was plotted in the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives, and the dishonor was invoked upon the party in Mr. CLEVELAND's message.

What difference does it make in morals whether the thief steals forty-nine dollars or fifty-one; whether the thief dictated by the rapacity of protectionism is forty-nine per cent, or fifty-one?

After the contest in Congress had once become a battle in the name of Democracy between forty-nine per cent. fraud and robbery, that is to say, upon the lines laid down by Mr. WILSON in his bill and by Mr. CLEVELAND in his message, honest tariff reform, genuine devotion to Democratic principle, genuine decency in the matter of the redemption of election pledges, were utterly lost to sight at both ends of the Capitol. The fatal leadership that planned perjury in November and December led the party right on to the unparalleled disaster and humiliation of August.

Late in the struggle between the two wings of Democratic protectionists, Mr. CLEVELAND tried to set up a new standard of Democratic principle, different from that under which he was elected in 1892, and which he repudiated in 1893. The President seems congenitally incapable of retraining for more than nine months at a

time, from pompous and platitudinous deliverances of "principle." So a month ago we had his letter to Mr. WILSON, declaring, in effect, that free raw materials were the essence of Democracy, and that bituminous coal and iron ore could not be taxed without party disgraced and ruin. The bill now before him for his signature, strikes down the wool-growing industry and protects coal. It frees salt and taxes raw sugar. It frees iron ore and taxes iron ore. There is a small discrimination for the sake of protection in the free list that there is in the schedules. It is no more a bill for free raw materials than it is a bill for revenue only.

Such is the "Democratic" tariff bill which goes to-day to the White House, carrying with it the odious income tax recommended last December by Mr. CLEVELAND as a tax "wise, just, and easily borne." Will Mr. CLEVELAND sign the reprieve of McKinleyism, death-sentence by his own party only two years ago, the monstrous offspring of selfish greed, the hybrid of Protection and Populism? We are inclined to think Mr. CLEVELAND will sign it, because, after all, it is the child of his own political cowardice.

Is It To Be Cleveland the Cheat?

That must soon be answered decisively. It is not our intention to review before the one remaining tribunal possessing authority to decide the Tariff bill the legal or the political objections to the establishment of a come-as-you-can tax for the United States. The constitutional reasons against it, and the appeals to the forbidding history and principles of the Democratic party have been ably and tirelessly presented by Senator HILL. Nothing of these can be expected to affect the partisan indifference of the Hon. GROVER CLEVELAND, or to impress that curious muddle of dulness and irresponsibility which makes up his mind. Mr. CLEVELAND, though, can understand as clearly as anybody the principle of contract and agreement. He can understand the force of the simple protest lately addressed to the Senate by certain individual citizens against their being selected, at the hands of the Democratic party and Executive, for unequal, unprecedented, and unexpected taxation on the plan advocated by the two parties known as the Populist party and Social Democratic party, which, at the trial resulting in Mr. CLEVELAND's success on the Democratic platform, had been overwhelmingly defeated. The case is perfectly simple, and it is here simply and clearly put:

"We, the undersigned citizens of the United States and members of the Democratic party, respectfully petition the Federal Senate to strike out the clause in the Tariff bill which provides for an income tax."

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